

Hexham
Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the
Medical Officer of Health

For the
Year ending 31st December, 1910.

Hexham :

R. Robson & Sons, Printers, The Abbey Press.

Medical Officer's Annual Report

FOR 1910.

NETHERTON,

HEXHAM,

January 9th, 1911.

DEAR SIR,

In bringing my report before your Council for the past year, I thought it might be of interest to some of the younger generation to give a short resume of the sanitary work done since I took office in 1873. At that time the work was new to us all, and by no means clearly defined, leaving scope for individual independent action. It is now much the opposite, and I am apprehensive lest those who follow us may be too much hedged in by red tape and official formulæ, which wither independent action, leading to routine theoretical practice, which, as a rule, is both unsatisfactory and expensive.

The climatic conditions of the past year were favourable to health. There were no extremes of temperature, and the rainfall was about normal.

123 deaths have been registered during the year—53 males and 70 females. 17 took place in the Workhouse, 11 of which were from outside your area, leaving 112, which gives a death-rate of 13.176 on an estimated population of 8,500. There were, however, 6 inquest cases from deaths resulting from violence, which reduces the number of deaths from disease to 106, and the death-rate to 12.47.

205 births have been registered—91 males and 114 females. 22 of these births were illegitimate; giving a birth-rate of 24.117 on the above mentioned population.

You will observe that the deaths are increased by 12 and the births are decreased by 9, while the illegitimate births are increased by 5.

AGES AT DEATH.—Under 1 year, 20 ; 1 and under 5, 8 ; 5 and under 15, 6 ; 15 and under 35, 12 ; 35 and under 65, 34 ; 65 and under 80, 30 ; 80 and under 90, 10 ; 90 and under 100, 3.

CAUSES OF DEATH.—24 were due to heart disease, 22 to diseases of the respiratory organs, 9 of which were from consumption or phthisis, 7 to pneumonia or inflammation of the lungs, and 6 to bronchitis ; 21 to diseases of the nervous system ; 9 to tubercular disease other than consumption ; 7 to senile decay, 3 premature births, 3 influenza, 2 whooping cough, 3 marasmus or wasting, 2 epidemic enteritis or diarrhoea. There were 6 inquest cases, the result of violence.

CASES NOTIFIED.—67 cases of infectious disease were notified as follows :—Erysipelas, 6 ; Phthisis or Consumption, 5, of which 3 were from the Workhouse ; Scarlet Fever, 4 ; Diphtheria, 31 ; Whooping Cough, 21 ; Measles, 4. Against 221 in 1909, 48 in 1908, and 93 in 1907.

HOSPITAL.—8 cases have been treated in the hospital during the year—7 of diphtheria, which made good recoveries, and one a person who had been in contact with smallpox in Newcastle, and was on tramp to Hexham. On receiving notice of this from the Medical Officer of Health of Newcastle, he was secured on his arrival at one of the common lodginghouses, vaccinated, and isolated for 12 days in the smallpox hospital. Fortunately he had not contracted the disease.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSE.—Hexham has no private slaughterhouse. The public ones were opened in 1902, and are very complete and satisfactory. Since their opening 26 full carcases have been destroyed and 1 calf—including 5 cases destroyed this year, and 1 case of actinomycosis partially destroyed. The Inspector has been a great help to me in this, and whenever there was the possibility of doubt, the opinion of a duly qualified veterinary surgeon has been taken.

HOUSING.—This is a big problem in an old town. Of the two properties especially mentioned as unfit for human habitation last year, one has been closed, and in the other case, which is a considerable block of property, the closing of which would have caused hardship to the tenants, the ownership is so complicated that if closed it would have become a nuisance in itself. An arrangement has been come to with the legal representatives of the property, sanctioned by your Council, by which the whole income of the property will be spent upon it, on the advice of your officials, until it is got into a condition

satisfactory to the Sanitary Authority. The more glaring defects were at once remedied. The housing in the old part of the town is not good. There is a want of through ventilation, and from that and other causes many of the houses are damp. A damp house is fatal to health, especially to the young. This is a subject which might well occupy your attention as a Sanitary Authority more than it has done in the past. Any effort and expenditure in this direction would be well repaid by the better health of the people.

WATER SUPPLY.—Hexham has a supply of excellent water—sufficient for its ordinary needs in ordinary years—excepting the hamlet of Low Gate, where the supply is at times deficient, and there is at all times considerable risk of contamination.

SEWERAGE.—The sewerage and drainage is efficient. The septic sewage works are working satisfactorily, but are taxed up to, if not rather beyond, their capabilities.

SCAVENGING.—The scavenging is well carried out, including the removal of all ashes and refuse. A great improvement on former years, when it was done by contract.

MIDDEN PRIVIES.—Hexham may congratulate itself on having no such abominations as midden privies, the water carriage system being in force in the whole of the town several years.

OBNOXIOUS TRADES.—There are no obnoxious trades as so defined.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—The 26 factories and 57 workshops, with 4 outworkers, have been visited, and found satisfactory.

LODGING-HOUSES—The *two* common lodging-houses have been regularly visited, including midnight surprise visits. They were found clean and as satisfactory as their structural conditions would permit, but leave a good deal to be desired.

MIDWIVES.—There are no midwives in Hexham.

NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS ACT.—As we now have a capable person to look after new born infants and their surroundings in the more densely populated parts of the town, the Notifications of Births Act may be adopted with advantage.

SCHOOLS.—I have not visited the schools. They are under the Education Department, which has its own medical staff for that purpose. Therefore let them have the full responsibility of their position and whatever credit may be got from it.

MILK SUPPLY.—Hexham has 27 dairies and 12 milk shops, and is upon the whole well supplied with milk, and of an average quality. I notice considerable improvement in the byres, the condition of the cattle, and the handling of the milk. This, however, does not reach an ideal standard. If such is to be attained still greater attention must be paid to details. In most cases the cleanliness of the byres and the grooming of the cows leaves much to be desired. As a rule little or no bedding is used, consequently the cows and the byres are more difficult to keep clean. This want of cleanliness is a great defect, and a risk to the milk consumer. If a high standard is to be obtained, and such cleanliness and purity of milk from dirt and disease assured, the expenditure of the farmer will be so increased that the question will arise: Can milk be supplied at the present price? Will the general public agree to an increase? I very much doubt it. Therefore, if this is not carefully handled, a worse state of things may be produced, by the poorer people using less milk.

A case of diphtheria occurred in the house of an important townsman in April, followed daily by a considerable outbreak, with the usual cry of defective drainage, sanitary neglect, &c. This was traced to one of the dairies, which supplied all the invalids either directly or indirectly with milk. On examination at the dairy, two of the attendants upon the cows had snivelling colds, and admitted having had such for some weeks, still perfectly able to do their work. One delivered the milk in the town. On bacteriological examination both were found to have diphtheria. They were removed to the hospital, and all sanitary necessary precautions taken at the dairy, with the result that the outbreak ceased at once, no fresh case arising. From this an important lesson may be drawn: That in future we must widen our outlook on the occurrence of any outbreak, and recognise the fact, now duly established, that the bacilli of diphtheria giving rise to the disease is more frequently swallowed than inhaled.

GLANDERS.—In February, I received notice from the police of an outbreak of glanders in the stable of one of the cab proprietors. In a stud of 10 horses no fewer than 8 either succumbed to the disease or were destroyed by order of the County Authorities. It is somewhat remarkable that an out-

break took place in the same stables some ten years previously. The stables, however, have undergone such extensive disinfection and alterations that if the disease has in any way a local origin, it is not likely to re-appear.

SURVEYOR'S REPORT.—The Surveyor reports as follows :

DRAINS and SEWERS laid under my supervision.—4" pipes, 3,104 feet ; 6" pipes, 673 feet ; 12" pipes, 180 feet.

WATER SUPPLY.—During last year 76 old defective iron service pipes were renewed with lead, and 7 new service connections made.

NUISANCES.—Defects have been dealt with as follows :—

Defective Water Fittings, W.C. Cisterns, &c.	-	-	182
Notices Re-Cleansing Common Yards	-	-	235
Defective and Unsatisfactory Drainage	-	-	32
Choked Drains	-	-	21
Property out of Repair and Unsatisfactory	-	-	18
Dirty Premises	-	-	12
Defective Yards and Surface Paving	-	-	10
Bad Smells from Drains, Coal Gas, etc.	-	-	10
Notices re Houses Unfit for Habitation	-	-	10
Insufficient W.C. Accommodation	-	-	9
Accumulations of Rubbish	-	-	8
Insufficient Water Supply	-	-	8
Defective Eaves and Down Comers	-	-	6
Carcases Condemned and Destroyed Completely	-	-	5
do. do. Partially	-	-	1
Miscellaneous Defects, Lime-washing, &c.	-	-	29
Total			<u>596</u>

During last year 14 new houses were certified as fit for habitation, making the total number certified since the Census of 1901, 406. One would infer from this that the population is underestimated. The Town Hall, Fell Side, and the back streets Rye Terrace Roads have been made up with tar macadam. Several of the rural footpaths have been coated with ashes. Improvements have been effected at the Sele Bank footpath by lessening the gradient. The road on the south side of Tyne Green has been diverted, and the road at the foot of Leazes Lane has been widened. The building known as the "Box Iron," at the entrance to the Burn Lane, has been

removed. The Council premises have been much improved and enlarged, having an up-to-date Council Chamber, and affording good accommodation for the officials.

May I be allowed to mention briefly some of the principle items which have engaged the attention of the various Boards and Councils under which I have had the pleasure and privilege to serve for 38 years. On taking office I resolved on all occasions to put to myself this question : " Is this or is it not injurious to the public health ?" From this I have never departed. It has formed the basis of all my action and advice, and if I have erred, it has been an error of judgment.

1st—My efforts were chiefly directed to the inculcation of cleanliness throughout the district by the speedy removal of all ashes, garbage, and refuse ; by the Sanitary Authority employing its own scavenging staff, instead of it being done by contract ; the doing away with all midden privies and piggeries in improper places, and the perfecting of the water carriage system.

2nd—The removal of damp, by having all property efficiently spouted, the back yards drained and cemented, and better ventilation encouraged.

3rd—Attention to the better ventilation and flushing of the sewers.

4th—The extension of the footpaths, their proper kerbing, flagging, or cementing.

5th—Increasing the water supply and improving its quality.

6th—Erection of isolation and smallpox hospitals.

7th—Suppression of all slaughterhouses in the town proper, and the erection of an efficient and convenient public one.

These are some of the principle things I have favoured, and which have been carried out.

May I mention some few things which I have advocated and which have not been carried out, and which, I think, worth the consideration of the Council.

1st—Overcrowding, and the better ventilation of all houses which have not through ventilation.

2nd—More encouragement to the closing of thoroughly damp and unhealthy property.

3rd—A reforming of the common lodging-houses.

4th—The providing of public wash-houses, with drying greens, in certain crowded parts of the town.

5th—The closing or removing of the Cattle Market.

GENERAL REMARKS.

There is nothing in the death-rate, birth-rate, or causes of death calling for special notice, being much the same as last year. It may be interesting to note that the death-rate from 1873 to 1880 inclusive, was 26.67 ; from 1881 to 1890, 19.25 ; from 1891 to 1900, 19.04 ; and from 1901 to 1910, 15.18 ; the average for the last five years being 13.77, the present year being slightly under this average. The average for the County Urban Districts last year was 13.72. The birth-rate for the corresponding period is as follows :—From 1873 to 1880, 36.43 ; 1881 to 1890, 30.5 ; 1891 to 1900, 28.35 ; 1901 to 1910, 25.88, the present year being under this average. The average for the Urban Districts of the County being 30.06 last year. For some time I have noticed and enquired into the persistency with which tuberculosis has clung to the cattle in a certain part of your district, more so than in others where, to all appearances, less care was taken to keep clear of it. As this was a dairy farm, the milk being sent to Hexham, my anxiety to get to the root of it was great. In consultation with a friend, who is an expert in such matters, we ultimately found that the rabbits on this farm were afflicted with “coccidean,” or consumption in rabbits. Here we had a vicious circle established by which rabbits and cattle having the same pasture affected each other. This opens up a wide field for future enquiry. I have not hitherto seen this publicly noticed.

Of late it has occurred to me that my communications to the Council have not been very acceptable, and that you draw your inspiration from other sources, what I advised being set aside. Last year you embarked upon two expensive and extensive schemes. In the first, the Abbey Grounds, my advice was not asked. It probably was thought that it did not come within my province. It may not do so directly, as it will neither add to nor detract from the public health, but indirectly it does so by creating a permanent charge upon the district, lessening the capabilities of the town to bear further burdens

for necessary sanitary work. Secondly : You propose taking a sewer, practically one mile in length, up the Allendale Road, in opposition to my known expressed opinion. This, if carried out, will cut into the very vitals of your sanitary system, the end of which it is impossible to foresee. There is no nuisance injurious to public health to be remedied. If you admit for argument sake that there is, those who cause it should be made to abate it, as you have made the people do at Low Gate and elsewhere. There is not sufficient water for flushing purposes. This, I understand, has been contradicted. If there is sufficient water at the Duke Willey, how does it happen that hitherto there has frequently not been sufficient for their own purpose, having been supplied by their neighbours, a source not available for public purposes. Again, your sewage disposal works are taxed to their utmost limit. The increase you propose to carry out at these works will do little, if any more, than meet the gradual natural increase. One other point. Why should these few powerful, wealthy people, receive preferential treatment? Hitherto when the sewers have been extended beyond what was considered the Urban boundary proper, the person or persons who would specially benefit by it had to specially contribute to it. For instance, when it was desired to include Causey Hill, the owner put the sewer in at his own expense. When it was extended to the Leazes, the owner met you handsomely. The owners at Kitty Frisk also had to contribute. No doubt there are other similar cases, which have escaped my memory, but these are sufficient to to illustrate my contention.

Under these conditions it behoves me to reconsider my connection with the Council, a step I take with great regret.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

DANIEL JACKSON, M.D.,

To JOHN A. BATY, Esq.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Clerk, &c.,

Hexham Urban District Council.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1910 and Previous Years.

Year.	Births			Total Deaths Registered in the District			Deaths of Non Residents registered in Public Institu- tions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institu- tions beyond the District.	Total Deaths at all ages belonging to the District.			
	Under 1 year of Age		At all Ages		Total Deaths Registered in the District				Deaths of Non Residents registered in Public Institu- tions in the District.			
	Number.	Rate, Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1900..	7000	177	25.285	29	163.728	154	22.000	24	12	..	142	
1901..	7150	187	26.153	32	170.112	141	19.706	22	11	..	130	
1902..	7500	198	26.400	16	80.808	114	15.200	16	8	..	107	
1903..	7500	211	28.133	25	118.483	144	19.200	20	10	..	134	
1904..	8000	215	26.875	31	144.186	157	19.625	28	9	..	148	
1905..	8000	216	27.000	29	134.259	125	15.625	24	12	..	113	
1906..	8250	212	25.696	22	105.773	139	16.848	25	13	..	126	
1907..	8250	202	24.484	17	84.158	132	16.000	20	15	..	117	
1908..	8500	211	24.823	38	180.694	135	15.882	21	6	..	129	
1909..	8500	214	25.176	19	88.785	111	13.058	18	11	..	100	
Averages for years 1900-1910		7865	204	26.002	25	127.038	135	17.314	20	10	..	124
1910.	8500	205	24.117	20	97.536	123	14.470	17	11	..	112	
											13.176	

* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

Note.—The deaths to be included in Column 7 of this Table are the whole of those registered during the year as having actually occurred within the district or division. The deaths to be included in Column 12 are the number in Column 7, corrected by the subtraction of the number in Column 10 and the addition of the number in Column 11.

By the term "Non-residents" is meant persons brought into the district on account of sickness or infirmity, and dying in public institutions there; and by the term "Residents" is meant persons who have been taken out of the district on account of sickness or infirmity, and have died in public institutions elsewhere.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water)—**5.149.**

Total population at all ages.....**7,071**
Number of inhabited houses**1,298**
Average number of persons per house ..**5**

At
Census of
1901.

Cases of Infectious Disease Notified during the Year 1910.

Notifiable Disease.	Cases Notified in Whole District.							District not divided into localities.	
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.							
		Under 1.	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upwds		
Smallpox .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup) ..	31	1	8	8	8	6	1		
Erysipelas	6	..	..	..	..	5	1	
Scarlet Fever	4	..	3	..	..	..	..
Typhus Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Relapsing Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Continued Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plague .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Phthisis	5	..	..	..	..	..	5	
Whooping Cough	21	2	14	5	..	..	..
Measles	4	..	1	3	..	..	..
 Totals	71	3	26	16	8	17	1		

Isolation Hospital situate in District.

Total available beds, 24.

Number of diseases that can be concurrently treated, 4.

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during Year 1910.

Causes of Death.	Deaths at the subjoined ages of Residents whether occurring in or beyond the District.							Total Deaths whether of Residents or non-Residents in Public Institutions in the District
	All Ages.	Under 1.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards	
Smallpox .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet Fever .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping-cough	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Croup .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fever { Typhus .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other continued .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Epidemic Influenza	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	..
Cholera .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plague .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diarrhoea	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	..
Enteritis .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Erysipelas .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	9	..	..	..	2	7	..	3
Other Tubercular Diseases	6	1	1	2	1	1	..	..
Cancer, Malignant Disease	5	..	..	..	..	2	3	1
Bronchitis	6	6	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pneumonia	7	2	2	1	..	1	1	..
Pleurisy .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs .. .. ..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..
Alcholism } .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cirrhosis of Liver } .. .. ..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..
Venereal Diseases .. .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Premature Birth .. .. ..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition .. ..	..	3	1	..	..	1	..	..
Heart Diseases	24	..	..	..	1	6	17	6
Accidents	4	..	..	2	..	2	..	1
Suicides	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	..
Apoplexy	8	..	..	..	..	4	4	..
Senile Decay	7	..	..	..	..	..	7	2
All other causes	31	6	3	..	1	10	11	3
All causes	123	20	8	6	7	39	43	17

III. All the Mortality among the Testees

Deaths from stated Causes in Weeks and Months under One Year of Age.

Births in the Year—Legitimate, 183 ; Illegitimate, 22. Deaths from all Causes at all Ages, 123. Population (estimated to middle of 1908), 8,598.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, WORKPLACES, & HOMEWORK.

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops, and Workplaces.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises. (1)	Number of		
	Inspections. (2)	Written Notices. (3)	Prosecutions. (4)
Factories... 	33	5	...
(Including Factory Laundries)			
Workshops 	62	2	...
(Including Workshop Laundries)			
Workplaces ... ... ... ...	...	...	...
(Other than Outworkers' premises included in Part 3 of this report)			
Total 	95	7	...

2.—Defects Found in Factories, Workshops & Workplaces.

Particulars. (1)	No. of Defects.			Number of Prosecutions (5)
	Found. (2)	Remedied. (3)	Referred to H. M. Inspector. (4)	
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—				
Want of cleanliness 	1	1	...	...
Want of Ventilation 	1	...	...	...
Overcrowding ... ... ...	...	...	...	...
Want of drainage of floors ... ...	...	...	...	...
Other nuisances 	5	3	...	...
Sanitary accommodation } insufficient 	4	Promised to give attention.		...
} unsuitable or defective	...	...	...	...
} not separate for sexes	...	...	...	...
Total 	11	4	...	...

3.—Home Work.

NATURE OF WORK. (1)	Lists Received from Employers.			
	Sending twice in the year.			
	Lists. (2)	Outworkers.		Work- men. (4)
		Con- tractors (3)	Work- men. (4)	
Wearing Apparel—				
(1) making, &c.	4
(2) cleaning and washing
Lace, lace curtains and nets
Artificial Flowers
Nets, other than wire nets
Tents
Sacks
Furniture and upholstery	2	2
Fur pulling...
Feather sorting	2	2
Umbrellas, &c.
Carding, &c., of buttons, &c.
Paper bags and boxes
Basket making
Brush making
Racket and tennis balls
Stuffed toys
File making
Electro-plate
Cables and chains
Anchors and grapnels
Cart gear
Locks, latches, and keys
Pea picking
TOTAL	8	8

4.—Registered Workshops.

Workshops on the Register (s. 131) at the end of the year. (1)	No. (2)
Bakehouses	7
Other Workshops	53
Total number of workshops on Register ...	60

Important classes of workshops, such as workshop bakehouses, may be enumerated here.

5.—Other Matters.

Class (1)	No. (2)
Matters notified to H.M. Inspector of Factories :—	
Failure to affix Abstract of the Factory & Workshop Act (s. 133)	...
Action taken in matters referred by H.M. Inspector as remediable under the Public Health Acts, but not under the Factory and Workshop Act (s 5). Notified by H.M. Inspector	...
Other	...
Underground Bakehouses, (s. 101) :—	
Certificates granted during the year	...
In use at the end of the year	...